

CDC in Lao PDR



The Center for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) began working in Lao PDR in 2006. In 2010, the National Center for Laboratory and Epidemiology (NCLE) was designated as a National Influenza Center (NIC) by the World Health Organization (WHO). Over the past 10 years, Lao PDR has continued to develop and improve their capacity building beyond influenza in support of the International Health Regulations. There has been a significant strengthening of engagement to include technical assistance in HIV/AIDS prevention and control and expanded maternal and child health immunization coverage.



Staff

CDC office (physical presence)
0 U.S. Assignee
1 Contractor
3 Locally Employed



At a Glance

Population: 6,520,900¹
Per capita income: \$2,200²
Life expectancy at birth women/men: 69/64 yrs²
Under 5 mortality: 59/1000 live births²

Source:

¹ Population Reference Bureau, 2012

² Population Reference Bureau, 2012



Top 10 Causes of Death

1. Influenza and pneumonia 13%
2. Coronary heart disease 11%
3. Stroke 10%
4. Dengue 9%
5. Diarrheal diseases 5%
6. Liver cancer 5%
7. Birth trauma 4%
8. Low birth weight 4%
9. Road traffic accidents 3%
10. Other injuries 3%

Source:

<http://www.worldlifeexpectancy.com/country-health-profile/laos>

Influenza

In Lao PDR, CDC builds capacity for avian, pandemic, and seasonal influenza preparedness by strengthening laboratories, surveillance, outbreak response, capacity building initiatives, infection control guidelines and best practices, clinical case management, and pandemic planning. CDC technical investments have led to recognition of seasonal influenza as a public health problem, reliable laboratory capacity to detect influenza viruses, data sharing of viral data with the WHO Global Influenza Surveillance and Response System to inform global vaccine strain selection, and improvements and expansion nationwide of the Influenza-Like Illness and Severe Acute Respiratory Illness Surveillance Networks. WHO recognized the National Center for Laboratory and Epidemiology by designating it a National Influenza Center in August 2010. In 2012, Lao PDR introduced seasonal influenza vaccine through an innovative private-public partnership where excess vaccines from the United States and Australia were donated to Lao PDR. The partnership marked the first time seasonal influenza vaccine was introduced in a low income country from the region. In 2014, 763,000 doses were given to priority high-risk groups (pregnant women, elderly, chronically ill and health care workers), and CDC assisted Lao PDR Ministry of Health conduct an evaluation of the effect of vaccination on birth outcomes. This novel approach now serves as a model for vaccine introduction in other low income countries.

Immunization

CDC's contribution to the Expanded Program for Immunization is channeled through WHO in Lao PDR. CDC provides operational and technical support for vaccine initiatives to reduce death and disability. CDC experts also assist in monitoring vaccination campaigns, including pre-campaign planning and post campaign review, as well as evaluating the introduction of new vaccines. Recently, CDC's efforts in Laos have focused on operational research to increase the number of newborns receiving the birth dose of hepatitis B vaccine, a crucial intervention to prevent transmission from mother to baby.



Field Epidemiology Training (FET)

CDC capacity building investments include standing up and providing operational support for the Lao FET. A year-long training initiative intended to decentralize outbreak response and surveillance capabilities, Lao FET is organized into three modules, with each consisting of one month of practical classroom instruction and three months of field work. The Lao FET has resulted in a national network of 39 alumni and uniquely brings human and animal health FET candidates together to carry out invaluable investigative work that has led to the following:

- Recognition of morbidity and mortality associated with seasonal influenza outbreaks
- Expansion and improvements of influenza surveillance networks
- Determination of the susceptibility of women of child-bearing age to rubella
- Assessments of adverse events following immunization and vaccine acceptability for pandemic and seasonal influenza vaccination campaigns
- Recognition of the outbreak potential of Japanese encephalitis (JE) virus and implications for JE targeted vaccination
- Recognition and control of human anthrax outbreak
- Management by the Lao FET of 25 outbreak investigations in less than three years

HIV/AIDS

The CDC Thailand Global HIV/AIDS Asia Regional Office has worked in Lao PDR since 2009, to strengthen the country's HIV response, with a focus on both clinical quality services and building health systems capacity, including: HIV prevention in men having sex with men, counseling and testing, care and treatment, laboratory capacity, HIV surveillance, health information systems, and mother-to-child transmission. Activities include development of innovative intervention models, training curricula, guidelines, and standard operating procedures; field supervision; and data-driven program planning and decision-making for maximum disease and health impact. CDC leveraged many "lessons learned" from Thailand's experience to establish a high quality, robust national HIV/AIDS program tailored to the Lao setting. The Regional Thailand Office team works with the Thai Ministry of Public Health, and other Thai government and academic partners, to provide joint technical assistance to Lao PDR, such as training and study visits in several areas, including pediatric comprehensive HIV care and treatment, ART management and monitoring systems, antiretroviral therapy for prevention of mother to child HIV transmission, and sexually transmitted disease care for high risk groups. HIV/AIDS work has also benefited through collaboration with WHO and partnering with the National Center of HIV/AIDS and Sexually Transmitted Infections.

Impact in Laos

- Investments in influenza laboratory detection, surveillance, and outbreak response capabilities have led to Lao PDR being designated a WHO National Influenza Center and to vaccine introduction.
- Lao PDR's one-year FET program is a model for other countries where ministries of health have limited staff available to participate in a typical two-year FET program.
- CDC is working with Lao PDR on rabies prevention and control activities. Activities include a dog registration and vaccination campaign.

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For more country information: <http://www.cdc.gov/globalhealth/countries/laos>

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